United Nations S/2004/492

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 June 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 11 June 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to my letter of 17 March 1997 (S/1997/236), in which I informed the Security Council of my decision to appoint as my Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Mr. James A. Baker III to help me to assess the situation and make recommendations in regard to all questions related to the impasse in the implementation of the Settlement Plan.

During the seven years that Mr. Baker served as my Personal Envoy, he held 14 formal and numerous informal meetings with the parties, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, and the neighbouring countries, Algeria and Mauritania, and proposed a number of possible approaches to solve the conflict. While progress was made, the parties have not been able to reach an agreement. In this connection, Mr. Baker has informed me that he believes that he has done all he can do on this issue and he has therefore offered his resignation as my Personal Envoy. It is with deep regret that I have accepted his resignation.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my admiration and gratitude to Mr. Baker for the considerable effort and valuable time he has selflessly devoted to helping the parties reach a solution to the question of Western Sahara. Throughout his tenure as my Personal Envoy, Mr. Baker used the best of his unparalleled diplomatic skills in seeking a resolution of the conflict. I regret that the parties did not take better advantage of his assistance.

I have decided that in his capacity as my Special Representative for Western Sahara, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, will continue to work with the parties, and neighbouring countries, in pursuit of a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

04-38924 (E) 150604